

Up to 55 miles the country is all suitable for close settlement, and also from 65 miles to 90 miles, while the balance is only fit for close settlement in isolated places.

Waitara Route.

The country along this route up to 23 miles, in Mimi Valley, is good, being for fifteen miles suitable for agricultural purposes. It is described more particularly under Awakino route.

From 23 miles to junction with Nagire route it is rough, only occasional pieces being suitable for close settlement.

This route, in addition to passing through all the rough country on the Ngaire route, passes through the rough country between the Ngaire route and the sea-coast, and then has the sea on one side for the remaining distance, which is sufficient to condemn it without considering its excessive cost per mile.

Awakino Route.

From the Waitara River to Pukearuhe, near the White Cliffs, the country is undulating, forming in plan a roughly shaped triangle, with its base, about four miles and a half long, between Waitara and Tikorangi, and its apex at Pukearuhe. This is bounded on the north and west by the sea, and on the south and east by rough ridgy country. The line crosses this undulating country—which is of good quality, and suitable for agricultural purposes—as far as the Mimi River, where it turns and follows up the valley. With the exception of the short length on the coast, the Mimi Valley, like the valleys of all the rivers along the coast, is formed of steep papa ridges and spurs, with a small extent of flat ground in the bottom.

From the Tongaporutu River to Awakino Heads there is a small extent of undulating country immediately adjoining the beach, which is succeeded by papa-rock ridgy hills.

From Awakino Heads to a few miles below Mahoenui the country is very broken. Thence to the Central line the country is generally good, and suitable for close settlement. The hills are less steep, and the valleys more open. Limestone shows freely throughout this last part.

FORMER REPORTS.

The country and engineering features of the Ngaire route have been reported upon before—namely, in 1884 and 1889, the former on completion of exploration, the latter on completion of detail survey. My recent inspection of the country has given me no cause to modify the views expressed therein, the gist of which are included in this report.

LAND-TENURE.

This has not been considered, because, no matter who the land belongs to, it must bring revenue to the line, and the Government has the power of compelling proper cultivation through the Land for Settlements Act.

SETTLEMENT.

Ngaire Route.

The opening-up of the country along this route by means of roads has advanced settlement very much, large areas of bush land having been cleared and brought into cultivation. Settlers are now living along the line as far as the 50th mile, and some settlement has taken place in the Mangaroa Valley.

Waitara Route.

Very little settlement has taken place on this route beyond that in the Mimi Valley.

Awakino Route.

The undulating country along the coast for some distance beyond Tongaporutu River is now settled, and settlement is now extending up the Tongaporutu Valley.

From Awakino Heads to a little beyond Mahoenui settlement has taken place, a large area of bush along the road between these places having been cleared.

A special settlement has been made at Paemako, and a considerable area has been improved at Puketiti.

MINERALS.

Ngaire Route.

Coal-seams have been seen in the Tangarakau Valley at 61 m. 40 ch., and in the Paparata Valley at 63 m. 60 ch.

Limestone in the form of shell rock has been found in the hills near 15 miles, and in the Tangarakau Gorge.

Gravel has been found up to 8 miles, and also in Tangarakau Gorge, Mangaroa, and Ongaruhe Rivers.

Building-stone, suitable for chimneys, small culverts, &c., occurs in the form of shell-rock limestone in the Tangarakau Gorge, and in the form of rhyolite in the vicinity of Central line.

Waitara Route.

Coal as on Ngaire route.

Limestone in form of shell rock in the Tangarakau Gorge.

Gravel occurs up to Uruti, 22 miles, and in Tangarakau Gorge, Mangaroa, and Ongaruhe Rivers.

Building-stone as on Ngaire route.